NCA
VOC FOR PGM/FN
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CHARLES WEISS/NICOSIA

CYPRUS -- DIVIDED ISLAND

ANNCR:

THERE IS NO DISCERNIBLE MOVEMENT IN THE CYPRUS DISPUTE. THE ONCE PROMISING INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS ARE STALLED. THE MOST FORWARD-LOOKING NOTE IS HEARD FROM THE U-N, WHICH SAYS, LET'S WAIT TILL AFTER THE AMERICAN CONGRESS DECIDES WHETHER TO LIFT THE EMBARGO ON ARMS SALES TO TURKEY AND SEE HOW THE PARTIES REACT. BUT THERE IS MORE TO THE PROBLEM THAN THAT, AS CHARLES WEISS REPORTS,

VOICE:

UNDERLYING THE CYPRUS STALEMATE IS A DEEP DISTRUST ON THE TURKISH SIDE AND WOUNDED PRIDE IN THE GREEK CAMP. THE TURKISH CYPRIOTS STILL FOCUS ON THE TIME WHEN THEY FELT THEY WERE SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS OF THE CYPRIOT STATE. AND THE GREEK CYPRIOTS ARE STILL RELIVING THE SHOCK OF THE TURKISH INVASION WHICH UPSET THE COMFORTABLE, ESTABLISHED ORDER, DISPOSSESSING THEM OF A LUSH, RICH AND DESIRABLE CHUNK OF THEIR LOVELY ISLAND.

YET BOTH SIDES DESPERATELY NEED TO BE RE-UNITED. THE TURKISH CYPRIOT SIDE SUFFERS FROM RAMPANT INFLATION, AND SOME OF THE FINANCIAL ILLS IT CONTRACTED WHEN IT ADOPTED THE TURKISH LIRA AS CURRENCY, INCLUDING A FLOURISHING BLACK MONEY MARKET. AND, ALTHOUGH TURKISH CYPRIOTS HAVE TAKEN OVER THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION IN THE OCCUPIED NORTH, MANY HOTELS STAND EMPTY AND FACTORIES ARE UNDER-USED. TURKISH OFFICIALS ADAMANTLY REFUSE TO PROVIDE SOLID FIGURES WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT INDUSTRIES, SUCH AS IMPORTS-EXPORTS, AND GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT. THE INFORMATION IS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES, AND THEY'RE ALWAYS DESCRIBED AS RISING. BUT THE VISIBLE CONTRAST WITH THE SEEMINGLY PROSPEROUS GREEK-CYPRIOT SIDE BELIES THE OPTIMISTIC ACCOUNTS.

MEANWHILE, THE GREEK CYPRIOTS APPEAR TO HAVE MADE A MIRACULOUS RECOVERY. FOUR YEARS AGO, NEARLY FORTY PERCENT OF THE POPULATION WAS DRIVEN FROM THEIR HOMES. INDEED, ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT PLANNER, YACOVUS ARISTIDOU, THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY REPRESENTED SEVENTY PERCENT OF CYPRUS'S WEALTH IN NINETEEN SEVENTY-FOUR. YET TODAY THERE'S NEARLY FULL EMPLOYMENT ON THE GREEK SIDE AND WHAT MISTER ARISTIDOU CALLS A SLIGHT SURPLUS IN THE BALANCE OF TRADE, WITH EXPORTS OF A TRUNCATED REPUBLIC RUNNING AT THREE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR, MORE THAN DOUBLE WHAT THE ENTIRE ISLAND SOLD ABROAD IN NINETEEN SEVENTY-THREE, THE LAST YEAR BEFORE THE INVASION. EVEN SO, HE SAYS, PARTITION IS REALLY NOT VIABLE ECONOMICALLY. THE GREEK CYPRIOT PERFORMANCE, SAYS MISTER ARISTIDOU, IS THE RESULT OF HIGHER WORLD MARKET PRICES AND THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR, WHICH FOR A TIME COMBINED TO MAKE CYPRUS COMPETITIVE.

BUT, HE SAYS, GREEKS WHO LEFT TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF ASSETS BEHIND IN THE NORTH HAVE NOT REALLY RECOVERED. HE SAYS THEY LACK THE INVESTMENT CAPITAL NEEDED TO DUPLICATE WHAT THEY LEFT BEHIND. HE PREDICTS HARD TIMES AHEAD, NOTING A DECLINE IN EXPORTS IN NINETEEN SEVENTY-EIGHT, AND A STEADY RISE IN THE RATE OF INFLATION.

NEVERTHELESS, THE TWO SIDES CONTINUE TO SPAR WITH EACH OTHER, WITHOUT ADVANCING PROSPECTS THE TINY ISLAND WILL ONE DAY BE RE-UNITED.

ON THE TURKISH SIDE, EVERYONE HAS STORIES OF MISTREATMENT, BRUTALITY, AND RANK DISCRIMINATION AT THE HANDS OF THE GREEKS BEFORE NINETEEN SEVENTY FOUR. THEY REMEMBER THE REPEATED CALLS FOR "ENOSIS," THE GREEK TERM FOR THE UNION OF THE ISLAND WITH MAINLAND GREECE, MADE BY LEADERS OF THE REPUBLIC.

WHEN PRESIDENT MAKARIOS WAS OVERTHROWN IN JULY NINETEEN SEVENTY-FOUR, IT SEEMED THAT TURKISH CYPRIOT FEARS OF ENOSIS WERE ABOUT TO BE REALIZED. THEN TURKEY STEPPED IN. BUT TODAY, SOME GREEK CYPRIOTS WILL TELL YOU THAT THOSE WHO ENGINEERED THE COUP AGAINST MAKARIOS SHOULD BE SHOT, AND THAT GREEK CYPRIOT SUPPORT FOR ENOSIS IS REALLY NOT WIDESPREAD. BUT GENERALLY, THE MOST TRAUMATIC SETBACK VISITED ON THE GREEK CYPRIOTS IN RECENT GENERATIONS -- THE TURKISH INVASION -- IS TREATED AS A CALAMITY FOR WHICH GREEK CYPRIOTS ARE ENTITLED TO UNIVERSAL SYMPATHY. GREEK CYPRIOTS ARGUE THAT THE PROVOCATION WAS NOT ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY THE DEVASTATING BLOW THAT EVENTUALLY FELL.

ON THE QUESTION OF STALEMATED INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS, PRESIDENT KYPRIANOU SAYS THAT WERE IT NOT FOR THE PRESENCE OF THE TURKISH ARMY, THE GREEK AND TURKISH CYPRIOTS COULD WORK OUT A SETTLEMENT IN WEEKS, IF NOT DAYS. BUT, AS MATTERS STAND, NO ONE SEEMS TO BE BUILDING BRIDGES OVER THE CHASM BETWEEN GREEK AND TURKISH COMMUNITIES ON THIS DIVIDED ISLAND.

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WJL/RTD